



RECYCLE USED MOTOR OIL FILTERS

A FACT SHEET FOR DO-IT-YOURSELF MECHANICS
FROM THE WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

How should I manage my used oil filter? The environmentally preferred way to manage your used oil filters is to have them recycled. Some service stations, quick oil change shops, car dealerships and car repair shops will accept your filters for recycling. Although municipal used oil collection facilities are not currently required to accept used oil filters, some are also accepting used oil filters. The oil filters can be sold to scrap metal recyclers who extract the valuable steel. The captured oil can be burned for energy or recycled.

Please try to bring your drained filters to a local used oil collection facility that will crush or shred them and recycle them as scrap metal. Crushing filters recovers about 80% of the oil while draining alone only recovers about 40% (roughly 4 ounces).

Information on used oil and oil filter collection facilities near you is available from your local recycling or solid waste officials.

Although recycling is preferred, Do-It-Yourselfers are allowed to put used oil filters in the trash. (Note that the requirements for businesses and institutions are different, see the companion fact sheet (SW-135) "Recycle Used Motor Oil Filters: A Fact Sheet for Businesses & Institutions.") If you choose to put your filter in the trash, you should first drain as much oil as possible from the filter. A dripping used oil filter is a much greater environmental hazard than a properly drained one.

How do I drain my filter? Draining a filter is very easy: safely punch or drill a hole in the top and tip it over a drain pan. Or, without punching a hole, tip the filter at an angle over a drain pan. Let the filter drain for at least 12 hours or until no more free-flowing oil drains out. Stuff paper towels in the hole in the drained filter. Then put the filter and paper towels in the box the new filter came in and place it all in the trash. Since used oil buried in landfills can still cause environmental problems, it is very important to drain the filters as much as possible.

Publication available

Bulk and single copies of this fact sheet are available free from:

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